

Samuel Woods, of Tottenham. He was engaged in the construction of the Settle and Carlisle Railway, and subsequently in engineering work upon Seaham harbour. In 1853 he went to Spain as railway engineer, and while there he entertained the members of the Himalaya Eclipse Expedition in June 1860 at Santander, for which he received the thanks of the Society. In 1864 he accepted an appointment in Gurney's Bank; and when this bank, in 1896, assumed the style of Barclay & Co., Mr Sewell was elected one of the Directors for the Norwich District.

Mr Sewell was a man of broad sympathies. In the parish of Buxton, where he had property, he was greatly interested in the Reformatory for juvenile offenders, which he practically kept alive, both morally and financially. He was also an active worker on behalf of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society.

Mr Sewell was a justice of the peace, and was one of the original Aldermen appointed on the formation of the Norfolk County Council. Mr Sewell was twice married, but he died a widower, leaving one son, Mr Philip Edward Sewell.

Mr Sewell was elected a Fellow 11th January 1861, and died 6th February 1906.

WILLIAM SIMMS, who died on 2nd January last at the age of eighty-nine, was the oldest Fellow of the Society, having been elected in 1851, three years before any existing Fellow. The names of Troughton and of Simms have been so long honourably associated with the history of practical astronomy that the opportunity may be taken to recall a few facts about the different individuals who have borne them.

Edward Troughton (1753-1835) was admitted as a young man to partnership with his uncle of the same name and his eldest brother John, who were settled in London as mathematical instrument makers. About 1782 the Troughtons established themselves in Fleet Street, where they commenced an independent business, called "Ye Orrery," as successors to a series of well-known artists (Wright, and subsequently Cole) who had previously occupied the same premises. After the death of his uncle and his brother John, Edward Troughton alone continued the business until 1826, when he took Mr William Simms (1793-1860) as his partner and successor. After Troughton's retirement in 1831, William Simms continued the business alone till his death in 1860, when he was succeeded by his son James Simms, the present sole proprietor.

William Simms had five brothers; one of them, Frederick Walter Simms (1803-1865), was for a short time previous to 1835 assistant at the Royal Observatory under Pond, and a Fellow of our Society; and another brother, James, was a manufacturer of ships' and other compasses in Greville Street, Hatton Garden. Our recently deceased Fellow, William Simms (1817-1907), was the son of this brother James, and was originally intended for his father's business. But about 1836 the construction of railways had commenced, and his uncle's occupation (of making astronomical

and surveying instruments) seemed so much more promising than that of a compass-maker, that he was led to apply to the well-known firm for a situation, which was easily found for him. He became superintendent of the business, and afterwards a partner with his cousin; but in 1871 (after being partner for some ten years) he retired, during a loss of health which he regarded as permanent, but which fortunately proved only temporary.

The *Monthly Notices* contain several papers by "William Simms jun.,"* especially on the improvement of instruments. The hole in the central cube of the Greenwich transit-circle telescope was first suggested by him, according to the recollection of Mr James Simms; and (on the same authority) he greatly improved the cutting apparatus of the dividing machines, while as a hand-divider he could scarcely be excelled. For a long time he was employed upon the construction of the National Standard of Length, and greatly assisted the Rev. R. Sheepshanks in that work, a large number of the observations, as well as much in the way of construction, being due to him. He also helped the elder Lord Rosse, put up Mr Carrington's telescope, and did work at Bidston Observatory. His astronomical interests were wide in range; and his daughter (Mrs M'Lachlan) well remembers an occasion when letters announcing some interesting and novel observation made independently by Sir George Airy and himself crossed in the post. We learn from her also that observations on the Sun caused the loss of her father's eyesight.

While in business, and after his marriage in 1844 to Charlotte, daughter of Francis Needham, of Wymondham, Leicestershire, William Simms lived at Granville Square (in London), at Putney, and at Charlton. After his retirement he lived at Burnham, in Somerset; and afterwards in the Isle of Wight, at Ryde and Shanklin. He had one son, who is a surveyor in New Zealand, and the daughter above mentioned. His widow survives him, aged ninety-six, and also quite blind. The late Queen was much interested in the aged couple, and shortly before her death Mr William Simms was granted a small Civil List pension, on account of his blindness, caused by devotion to science.

He was born in London, 22nd June 1817; and died at Albert Lodge, Shanklin, I.W., 2nd January 1907. He was elected a Fellow on 10th January 1851 (the Report of Jurors of the great Exhibition of 1851 mentions his management of the Astronomical Exhibits), and served on the Council 1867-69. H. H. T.

THE REV. GEORGE VENABLES was born at Hamptongay, Oxon, 24th April 1821. He was educated at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where he took the degree of Student of Civil Law. In 1843 he married Miss Davis of Loudwater, Berks, by whom he had six children. The wife and one daughter survive him. In 1852 he

* In one case there is some confusion with another "William Simms junr.," afterwards described as W. H. Simms. He was the son of William Simms the elder, and brother of the present sole representative of the firm.